

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, independent claim 1 with dependent claims 3-8 will be present in the application.

The drawings and specification were objected to, the Office Action contending that "the limitations of the protrusions being positioned at the recited distance h_1 lacks antecedent basis in the specification". The drawings were also objected to, the Office Action contending that "the limitation of the supporting element having an I-shape as recited in claim 12." h_1 may be found to the left of the middle rod (1) in Figure 1 and is discussed on page 2, lines 19-21 and on page 4, lines 18-20, of the specification. Applicant respectfully submits that such disclosure provides the required antecedent basis for the claim limitations with respect to the protrusion. Claim 12 has been canceled.

Claims 1 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 499,154. Claims 2-7, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over EP 499,154.


Figures 4 and 6 of EP 499,154 clearly show that the protrusions and recesses of the device disclosed therein do not have complementary shapes, as required by claim 1. During assembly of this device, plastic deformation of the rods will occur, causing the relative positions of the rods to be changed and resulting in inaccuracies. In the present invention, the complementary shapes of the protrusions and recesses prevent inaccuracies of this type from happening. In addition, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 2 and 11 and now recites that each protrusion of the rods has "an elliptic shape or a circular shape having a radius r of $0.1 \text{ mm} < r < 2 \text{ mm}$ ". The Office Action had considered such changes in shape as being "obvious absent any persuasive evidence that such configurations are structurally significant". As taught in the subject specification, "the circular or elliptical formed protrusions lead to a more even area pressure and therefore to a good fixed correction with the supporting elements." (Page 4, lines 15-16) Therefore, the shape of the protrusion recited in claim 1 is patentably significant.

The various dependent claims add additional features to the independent claims, and are therefore believed to be allowable. Also, the dependent claims are believed patentably distinct on their own merits as being directed to combinations not suggested by the references.

In view of the above-directed amendments and the proceeding remarks, prompt and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Helmuth Gabl

By 
Clifford P. Kelly
Registration No. 35,213
Alix, Yale & Ristas, LLP
Attorney for Applicant

Date: August 5, 2002
750 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103-2721
(860) 527-9211
Our Ref: ANDPAT/150/US
CPK/io